

DCI
23 May 1984
Revision 3

TALKING POINTS - CONGRESS

Let me tell you quickly what the state of play in El Salvador and Nicaragua.

The Salvadoran guerrillas are planning a major expansion of forces and a fall offensive against the government of Jose Napoleon Durate, with heavy Cuban and Nicaraguan support. The presence or absence of the Nicaraguan Democratic Resistance may be a key element in whether the Nicaraguan supported offensive in El Salvador is a success or a failure. The Nicaraguan Resistance is making daily progress deep inside the country because it is receiving the massive support of the rural population. The Resistance forces are tying down major elements of the Sandinista military establishment, and are causing a major diversion of Sandinista military supplies which might otherwise be applied to the support of subversion in El Salvador or elsewhere in Central America.

You need not be surprised if President Duarte is confronted this fall with some thousands of trained Nicaraguan soldiers no longer needed to defend against the resistance turning up as Salvadoran guerrillas.

In El Salvador, a cutoff would boost the morale of the Salvadoran guerrillas while contributing enormously to the buildup for a fall offensive which Cuba and the Soviet Union already have under way. It would give the Sandinistas a green light to clamp down its totalitarian control over the people of Nicaragua, to expand throughout the country the Cuban method of people control by vigilantes, block by block, which has stifled the voice of the Cuban people and has already been imposed in Managua and other cities of Nicaragua. It would snuff out the hope for a democratic alternative to which Nicaraguans still aspire and which the resistance keeps alive for them. It would increase the fears in the area

about Nicaragua's aggressive policies and its purpose in acquiring tanks, training their pilots to fly Soviet MIGs and arming 100,000 men, more than all the other countries of Central America put together. It would reinforce the view all over Latin America that the US is an unreliable partner.

This time, a Bay of Pigs in Managua could not be attributed to military failure. The people we would be letting down have achieved an amazing success in establishing in two years an opposition in a totalitarian state. This time we would be telling the world we no longer find it politically acceptable or lack the political will, or the integrity, to stand by our own commitments. The impact of another American pullout will be devastating around the world. As we ask the Gulf states to join us in planning the defense of the sources of Western oil, we will be walking out on people we encouraged to work with us two years ago.

Now, for the human dimensions. When the opposition to the Sandinistas sprang up, only a few answered the call. But as the repression became greater and word spread of American support, thousands of people rallied to the opposition: workers, peasants, students, shopkeepers, farmers, ranchers, and even Sandinista soldiers.

Why did they come and why are they fighting? The answer is in the sorrowful litany of atrocities, religious persecution, displacement from tribal homelands, denial of livelihood -- all in the name of reformation of society and conformity with Marxist principles -- that has driven these people to risk their most precious possession, life itself.

Each and every one of these people will tell you, in his or her own way, that they will not give up this fight for a free and just homeland. They will

tell you they are not interested in politics, but they want the right to choose their leaders by vote. They will tell you they believe in God and do not want men with guns and power to intimidate their clergy, to run their schools, to insult the Holy Father, and to want to live in peace. But most of all, they will proudly tell you they will win this struggle for freedom and justice because God and America are on their side.

Imagine, if you will, the desperation and chaos which will result from our precipitous abandonment of these forces. Envision the despair and certain panic that will overtake thousands of men and women who are now fighting their oppressors deep within Nicaragua. Envision the hopelessness when they realize that their ammunition, food and other supplies are running low and are told that there is no resupply.

Although some will undoubtedly find the courage to survive and fight on, human nature dictates that most will beat a retreat for the sanctuaries of Honduras and Costa Rica. Envision the annihilation of these brave patriots, running for their lives, leaving the injured and wounded to the mercy of their adversaries. Envision the plight of Honduras and Costa Rica, now flooded with refugees, and having to cope with hundreds, if not thousands more, now armed and angry at their perceived betrayal. Envision the worse consequence, the destruction of human spirit, not only of these fighters for freedom but also those who have carried on the unarmed resistance from within Nicaragua -- the small band of churchmen, journalists, businessmen, farmers, labor leaders, intellectuals, politicians, mothers, fathers and young people -- who have fought for their rights against harsh, often brutal, repression.

This nation, its leaders and elected representatives, indeed you and I, have all fostered, encouraged and stimulated these people, who had already

suffered so much in their revolution, to fight again against another and much more powerful and reprehensible oppressor. We encouraged them to believe what we believe. And, we did so in good faith and with clear conscience because it is a morally just and righteous cause. These people have come now to believe in themselves and their dream, in us and our support for their struggle, and risk their lives in this belief. That faith and hope cannot and must not be shattered.

You have a fateful vote to cast -- a vote perhaps more than any other that will stick to our reputations as individuals and as a nation and an ally. In whatever we do, we will be speaking to people who have put their lives on the line, to other nations of Central America struggling for their freedom, to other free nations around the world, to the Soviet Union, Libya, Cuba, Iran and other aggressor nations, to the American people and their commitment to liberty. We will be speaking to history and to our future.

Within a year the national security and geopolitical position of the United States can be permanently impaired by a hostile base on the American mainland a little more than an hour's flight away. How will the historical record look? What were we doing while the Soviet Union was committing over \$4 billion a year in military and economic assistance to and through Cuba and positioning some 6,000 Soviet troops and advisors in Cuba, while some 3,500 Cuban military advisors and hundreds of Soviet bloc advisors worked to clamp totalitarianism on Nicaragua and its neighbor El Salvador. We, the United States, tried to counter this threat to our security with less than half a billion dollars in economic and military assistance and a mere handful of military advisors. About 10 percent of what the aggressors were doing! History will ask how

could we appropriate \$300 million for defense and withhold one ten-thousandth of that amount to continue support to people who have put their lives on the line to resist aggression and oppression sponsored by the Soviet Union and their proxies in our own backyard.

Let me now focus for a final moment on the practicalities of the situation we find ourselves in. It would be hard for anyone to contend that what we are talking about is not an asset in the fight against Communist domination of Central America. No one can be happy about letting it disappear for nothing. As long as those resistants are there on the ground they exert pressure on the Sandinistas, they divert them from mischief elsewhere, they represent hope and provide encouragement to their fellow countrymen, they can nourish pluralism and democracy in Nicaragua, they constitute a reason for the Sandinistas to improve their behavior. Many of you believe they have gone too far, that they should not do things that threaten third country interests. It should not be beyond our ingenuity to keep them in their country to let them exert their political will along with others in that country to evolve the kind of government that is right for all Nicaraguans.

Can we risk the alternative which President Reagan described in his speech two weeks ago when he said: continued Communist success in Central America "poses the threat that 100 million people from Panama to the open border on our south could come under the control of pro-Soviet regimes."

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Congress of the United States
Committee on Foreign Affairs
House of Representatives

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